

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

WEDNESDAY, 9 December 2009

6PM-8PM, Seattle City Hall Boards and Commissions Room L280

1. Call to order and introductions (6:02)

SPAB members in attendance: Tom Williams (Chair), Mark Bandy, (Vice Chair), Howard Wu (Secretary), Christina Bollo, Celeste Gilman, Kristen Lohse, Jon Morgan, Seth Schromen-Wawrin, Evan Brown (SBAB liaison to SPAB), Wendy Cho Ripp (Get Engaged)

Absent: Vanessa Lund, T Frick McNamara, Benjamin Smith

SDOT staff liaison: Brian Dougherty (SDOT)

Presenter: Brian Kemper, (SDOT); Valerie Lee (SDOT); Barbara Gray, (SDOT)

Public: Devor Barton, Doug Beeman, Christine Cole, Eli Goldberg, Jacob Struiksma

2. Meeting Minute Approval (6:03)

November meeting minutes were approved pending Seth's comments.

3. Public Comments (6:04)

Doug Beeman brought up his concerns with street lights. He is mindful of budget issues, but he would like the Board's help with getting more street lighting for pedestrian safety. Recently at the "Safety Summit" that he attended, the presentation showed that the severity of injuries from SUV type vehicles were five to ten times worse than from a passenger vehicle. He reported that Representative Mary Lou Dickerson will try to work with the legislation in the next session to make it a criminal offense for striking pedestrians.

4. Seattle Street Food Vending Initiative (6:06) – Gary Johnson, DPD

Gary Johnson works under the Department of Planning and Development (DPD), under the Land Use Policy group. He explained that the street food vending initiative focuses on the Downtown area or Center City. However, this initiative has implications to the rest of the City. One of DPD's goals is to create a better public realm for pedestrians, through major infrastructure improvements and bringing positive elements to the realm. The pedestrian realm includes food vendors on the street.

Background

The City and the general public have a desire for a livelier streetscape with a more active food scene. Historically, the County's health department has had a

very conservative view on street food. They viewed street food to be not as sanitary and unwanted street uses. The City felt that street food vendors have a positive impact on the City, not a negative impact on traditional brick and mortar restaurants. Street food vendors can be a positive activator of the streets and a pedestrian attractor.

The perception of the street food scene has changed with vendors like, Marination Mobile. They have brought up the quality of food offerings for street vendors. Also, organizations like Washington Cash have provided low cost financing for upgrading the facilities of street food vendors. The City's perspective on street food view mobile food vendors differently than push cart food vendors. The mobile food vendors have a better opportunity for health protection. Currently, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) has a specific ban in downtown for mobile vendors.

Proposal

- Remove 200' park setback;
- Creating a clear pathway for pedestrians but not being too rigid otherwise for food vendors;
- Set the operating hours; SDOT acknowledges the potential effects of operations on the local residents;
- Develop a pilot project in the Center City to have a mobile vendor in certain locations.

The pilot program would allow mobile food vendors to park in the parking lane and vend to the sidewalk. Finding good locations is challenging due to limited curb space. One possible location would be the southern block of Westlake Boulevard where SDOT is proposing to close it off to vehicular traffic. The City hopes to make the square successful by activating the space with mobile food vendors. Any mobile food vendor will be required to post public notice and will need to notify any adjacent businesses in person.

The City of Seattle and King County health codes will adopt the Portland model. They will not have a list on what can be sold, but rather restrict only cooked protein. Hopefully, this will allow for more diversity in food offerings.

Mark wanted to know if vendors can go to the park today. Gary responded that they can, but they need a permit. The Park Department has been proactive with attracting vendors in their parks. Mark then wanted to know if there will be coordination between the departments of Parks and Planning and Development, since there could be confusion over the park permit and street use permit. Gary told the Board that they are working with Parks right now, but they are not at that detail level yet. The Parks Department will take a portion of the proceeds where SDOT will get very little from their fees. SDOT is also reexamining their street use fees.

Mark also wanted to know how often mobile food vendors will need to get a permit. Gary informed us that right now you can not move them around, but the permit is an annual permit. The health department does not want the vendors to be mobile; they want to know where they are. The City does not want the potential of illegal activities to occur. You can get several annual permits for different locations. One of the reforms that they are considering for permit renewal is the verification of their location.

Mark noted that the Ballard farmer's market has vendors that sell food that is not on the list of permitted food as well as near brick and mortar restaurants. He wondered if restaurants that move in a location where vendors exist, would have the right to push out these vendors. It seemed onerous to get the permit from the restaurant owner. Gary responded that they have not thought about it and will need to take a look at it. Farmer market vendors are treated differently from food vendors. They too have special restrictions; a person dedicated to farmer markets looks at their health issues.

Christina wanted clarification about the number permits, "would mobile food vendors need both a health and street use permit?" Gary responded that King County health will allow mobile use as long as they notify their schedule. The City codes currently have parking requirements that may restrict the mobile vendor to use the parking lot.

Christina followed up the answer by asking if hot dogs fall under the coffee/flower/popcorn push cart list. Gary explained that under the new rules, it will not fall under that list any more.

Mark wanted to know if the setbacks from restaurants are in the current rule. Gary responded that it is not currently, but it is part of DPD's proposal.

Kristen wanted to know if there are any configuration requirements for push carts. Gary told the Board that the current rule is 3' x 5', but it will probably adopt King County's dimensions. Portland has rigid design guidelines.

Christine Cole expressed her support of the 50' setback from food service, and she informed the board that King County Health Department has a lot of specifications for different types of food vendors.

Jacob expressed his concern at the intersection of 4th Avenue and Union Street where a vendor is encroaching on to the clear path of travel. It is only there during business hours in the day. Gary responded that under the new system, the clear path will be verified. They will also look at a queuing plan. The travel path needs to maintain a 6' wide path of travel.

Jon wanted to confirm that the 6' path included the queuing people. Gary was not clear about that issue right now, and DPD is still looking at it. He hoped that the queuing plan would address these issues.

Jon wanted to know how sidewalk cafés interact with food vendors. Gary noted that the sidewalk café has the right to keep the food vendor 50' away, but the owner could waive it. The 50' would start from the outdoor area.

Gary then went over the timeline of their efforts. DPD will take these food vendor reforms to Council by the first quarter of 2010. They are actively seeking public feedback. He will come back to the Board with more concrete details.

5. “Way to Go” Program – David Allen, SDOT (6:45)

Background

The City is encouraging less driving. There have been many efforts including travel demand management (TDM) and incentive programs as well as the Pedestrian Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, and Walk-to-School program. Washington has the Commute Trip Reduction program to have large employers to reduce driving. The reason for these efforts relate to issues of climate change, obesity, air quality, livability of the City and community involvement.

Way to Go Program

This City program engages the public at three levels from the full involvement to the casual user. The “One Less Car Challenge” provides incentives to giving up a car in their household. “Commuter Cash” encourages commuters to use the options at hand and try to reduce the amount of driving to work. It includes \$60 card as well as zip car benefits. The next level is the “Cut 2 car trips per week”. It is intended for those who need to drive, but reduce it from their schedule. For those who have been not driving and have been using alternative transportation, there is the “Thank you Drive”.

The website (<http://www.seattle.gov/waytogo/>) has a list of resources and information about the program and the various incentive levels. The program has a lot of incentives with CBC, Bike Alliance, Zip Car, and REI. David came to the Board seeking feedback on the program's incentives that would be symbiotic with their goals.

Celeste suggested advertising through the Chamber of Commerce. David noted that they work with Metro who have worked with the Chamber.

Seth wanted to know if this program works with the “In Motion” program. David explained that the “In Motion” program provides a lot information, and “Way to Go” is part of their resources. Seth wanted to know if there was any statistics on how many people gave up their car. David could not give any numbers as of yet.

Wendy wanted to know how many prizes are available each year. David estimated that the program allotted for 200 people to give up cars.

Mark wanted to know the program's budget and its source of funding. David explained to the Board that most of the funning came from the City's general fund and some from State grants, some where between \$40,000 and \$50,000.

Jon wanted to know if it is all self-reporting for this program. David explained the difference at each of the 3 participation levels. At the second level, the program wants references. Most people who participate in these programs do not scam because the incentives are not lucrative. At the top level, the participant has to sign a contract that you will not buy a car in a year and show a proof of sale of the existing car. From this level, these participants roughly save 80 miles per week. In other program, they ask for mileage logs. "One-less Car" has bigger effect but less participants where as the "2-Less Trips" have more participant, but has less of an effect.

Wendy wondered if the City could do one big blitz given the limited funds. She suggested giving out a \$10 gift card for carpoolers, and/or do a publicity event. She felt that targeting the Cascade group folks are preaching to the choir, and the City needs to reach people who would not normally consider it. Perhaps the campaign can do something that is fun, which can attract their target audience.

Jacob suggested that the City should work with retailers along major bus routes. On-street parking slows down transit service, and he felt that there should have incentive for less parking. David responded that the City has educated people about the expenses of parking. They would rather work with the reasons for not driving rather than the parking supply issue. However, DPD is taking out parking requirements for downtown.

Seth wondered if the City has worked with taxi companies for incentives, perhaps taxi credit. He agreed that there needs to be more fun events and celebrate those who do not drive. Seth felt that they should target the program from a neighborhood basis and could emphasize walking around the neighborhood. Seth also cited the example of the bike network sticker as another incentive, where some merchants will give discounts. David explained that the City has looked at a taxi program, and he thought it was a good idea for taxi credit as well as discounts from local merchants.

David then asked from the Board for more feedback about testimonials and other online tools.

Jon pointed out the big hurdle for people who are newly car free people is to do their every day activities. He felt that they needed resources and support to figure this out. David mentioned that the "Way to Go" website has resources and tools on the website. Jon thought a class about bicycling would be helpful.

Mark suggested getting the message out to the local community websites. Potentially they can connect to local merchants through these sites. He also felt that the target audience should be focused on drivers who do non-work trips. He would like to see incentives to get those people from driving. David explained that before they did focus on non commute trips. The "In-Motion" program target these non-work trips. David thought it would be good to look at the local community websites.

Kristen brought up the issue of shopping carts. She felt that the program should provide resources or gifts for carts. Whenever she takes her kids on the bus, folding up a stroller on the bus is required on the Metro, but it is a hassle and becomes a disincentive. She wanted to know if they are working with the Sightline Institute with calculating the true cost of the driving. She then added that it would be good to have blinking lights for people to use in the dark. She would also like to see a step to step process to let you know where bike parking is located. David mentioned that they are working with Metro.

Jon suggested giving out pedometers to get people more aware of walking and look into bike rentals.

Kristen suggested a cross promotion with One Regional Card for All (ORCA) card. The advantage with the ORCA is that you do not need to dig out change. Perhaps the program can give people an ORCA card. Kristen noticed that the other day, US Bank was doing a promotion by giving away \$5 ORCA card in downtown Seattle. A free ORCA card is especially valuable after they implement the \$5 processing fee.

6. Holiday Pedestrian Safety Campaign - Brian Dougherty, SDOT (6:25)

Jennifer is giving out T-shirts to show her appreciation for the Boards involvement with the campaign.

7. Recruitment Board Members – Brian Dougherty, SDOT (6:28)

Brian mentioned that recruitment for Board members end on December 18. SDOT is still accepting applications and is looking for wide variety of backgrounds. The schedule after that will be a rocky process. Due to the changes in the mayor's office, the schedule might be extended. Brian hopes that the new board members will be installed by March.

8. Nominations and Election for Next Year's Board (6:30)

Tom explained that there is a need for a succession plan for members who would carry on the Board's interests on to future board members. Many members will be leaving next year. After last month's meeting, he talked to other people to see

who wants to be involved. After some discussions, he proposed the possibility to expand the Board's role to be involved with other groups so that there is greater involvement. Then Tom opened the nominations for all positions.

Mark nominated Vanessa for secretary. Tom seconded the nomination.

Christina nominated Tom for Chair and Mark seconded the nomination.

Jon, Christina, Kristen were then nominated for Vice Chair. Mark then nominated Seth for Vice Chair, Tom seconded the nominations.

With the candidates running unopposed for Secretary and Chair unopposed, only the candidates for Vice Chair had to give a brief statement for their reasons in becoming the Vice Chair.

Christina explained that her interest in Vice Chair stems her joy from her involvement outside of the board, e.g. the holiday campaign. She enjoyed the off week activities, and wanted to be more active outside of the monthly meeting.

Seth explained that he saw the position of Vice Chair as an opportunity to be more involved. He felt that there can more connection with activities outside of the Board, and he would guide that. He would like the Board to be play an activist role.

Jon expressed his interest in the Vice Chair related to his civic duty. The pedestrian board is his primary civic work. However, his work schedule is very rigid, and he has trouble with meeting with groups during the day. He is very interested in outreach; he would get the word out to the public on what we do. He wanted the Board to play a more policy/funding advocacy at the City and the State level.

Kristen expressed her interest to become Vice Chair. She noted that she has flexible schedule to meet with groups and is interested in outreach to outside activities.

After voting, Christina is the new Vice Chair. Tom will remain as Chair and Vanessa will be the Secretary. Tom will work with the other three with involvement with other committees within the Board.

Celeste wanted to know the level interest in the Tri-party group and Bridging the Gap groups. Kristen is interested in both. Christina is interested in the Bridging the Gap.

Wendy announced that she needed to resign due to her future work with Councilmember Sally Bagshaw.

Tom ended the meeting by announcing next month's agenda. For January, the Pedestrian Master Plan work plan will be presented, and Brian may present his findings from his NYC trip in a future meeting.

Tom announced the he posted the handouts from last month's presentation on signals.

9. Adjourn Meeting (8:03)